2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat.

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(e) Prestige at funerals

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumbo*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwe*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwasanau (1886) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Nsalala (Mu'Ngonde).

[2] *cf.* J. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).